POINS. Put on two leather jerkins[4], and aprons^ and wait upon him at his table as drawers.

P. HEN. From a god to a bull ? a heavy descension[5]! it was Jove's case. From a prince to a prentice ? a low transformation! that shall be mine: for in every thing, the purpose must weigh with the folly. Follow me, Ned.

[Exeunt.

SCENE III.

Warkworth. Before the Castle.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND^ Lady NORTHUMBERLAND^ and Lady PERCY.

NORTH. I pray thee, loving wife and gentle daughter,

4 Put on two leather jerkins,] This was a plot very unlikely to succeed where the Prince and the drawers were all known; but it produces merriment, which our author found more useful than probability. JOHNSON

Johnson forgets that all the family were in the secret except Falstaff, and that the Prince and Poins were disguised. M MASON

But how does this circumstance meet with Dr Johnson's objection ? The improbability arises from Falstaff's being perfectly well acquainted with all the waiters in the house: and however disguised the Prince and Poins might be, or whatever aid they might derive from the landlord and his servants, they could not in fact pass for the old attendants, with whose person, voice and manner Falstaff was well acquainted. Accordingly he discovers the Prince as soon as ever he speaks. However Shakspeare's chief object was to gain an opportunity for Falstaff to abuse the Prince and Poins, while they remain at the back part of the stage in their disguises: a *jeu de theatre* which he practised in other plays, and which always gains applause. MALONE

5 — a heavy DESCENSION !] *Descension* is the reading of the first edition.

Mr. Upton proposes that we should read thus by transposition: 'From a god to a bull? a low transformation!—from a prince to a prentice? a heavy declension!' This reading is elegant, and perhaps right. JOHNSON.

The folio reads—declension. • MALONE